

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions and listings of Claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-25 (Previously Canceled).

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1/2/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25  
Claim 26 (Previously Added). An article of manufacture selected from the group consisting of a pipe and a pipe coupling comprising a polyethylene-based composition wherein the polyethylene exhibits a standard density, measured at 23°C according to ASTM Standard D 972, of greater than 940 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and wherein the polyethylene-based composition comprises talc in an amount of less than 1 part per 100 parts by weight of polyethylene.

Claim 27 (Previously Added). The article of Claim 26, wherein said exhibits a particle size distribution situated between 0.2 and 15 microns and a mean particle size between 1 and 5 microns.

Claim 28 (Previously Added). The article of Claim 26, comprising an amount of talc which is between 0.05 and 0.25 part per 100 parts by weight of polyethylene.

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Claim 29 (Previously Added). The article of Claim 26, wherein polyethylene is selected from the group consisting of ethylene homopolymer and ethylene copolymer containing, in total, from 0.01 to 10 mole % of at least one comonomer and exhibiting a standard density of greater than 943 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and not exceeding 960 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and a melt flow index, measured at 190°C under a load of 5 kg according to ISO Standard 1133 (1991), of 0.07 to 5g/10min.

Claim 30 (Previously Added). An article of manufacture according to Claim 29, characterized in that the polyethylene is selected from the group consisting of ethylene copolymer containing, in total, from 0.05 to 5 mole % of butene and/or of hexene.

Claim 31 (Previously Added). The article of manufacture of Claim 26, wherein said article is a pipe shaped by extrusion.

Claim 32 (Previously Added). The article of manufacture of Claim 26, wherein said article is a pipe coupling shaped by injection.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended). The article of Claim 26, wherein talc is added in an amount effective to increase a creep resistance of said ~~composition~~ article.

Claim 34 (Previously Added). The article of manufacture of Claim 26, characterized in that the talc exhibits an essentially lamellar texture.

Claim 35 (Previously Added) The article of manufacture of Claim 26, which is characterized by creep resistance (t), wherein t = creep resistance expressed in terms of time to fracture, measured according to ISO Standard 1167 (1996) at 20° C on a pipe having a diameter of 50 mm and a thickness of 3 mm and under a circumferential stress of 12.4.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended). The article of manufacture of Claim 27, which is characterized by creep resistance (t), wherein t = creep resistance expressed in terms of time to fracture, ~~measure~~ measured according to ISO Standard 1167 (1996) at 20° C on a pipe having a diameter of 50 mm and a thickness of 3 mm and under a circumferential stress of 12.4.

Claim 37 (Previously Added). The article of manufacture of Claim 26, wherein the polyethylene is high density polyethylene.

Claim 38 (Previously Added). An article of manufacture selected from the group consisting of pipe and pipe coupling, which comprises polyethylene wherein the polyethylene exhibits a standard density, measured at 23°C according to ASTM Standard D 972, of greater than 940 kg.m<sup>3</sup> and talc in an amount which does not exceed 0.5 part per 100 parts by weight of polyethylene.

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Claim 39 (Currently Amended). The article of manufacture of Claim 38, wherein talc is added in an amount effective to increase a creep resistance of said ~~composition~~ article.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended). The article of manufacture of Claim 38, which is characterized by creep resistance (t), wherein t = creep resistance expressed in terms of time to fracture, ~~measure~~ measured according to ISO Standard 1167 (1996) at 20° C on a pipe having a diameter of 50 mm and a thickness of 3 mm and under a circumferential stress of 12.4.

Claim 41 (Previously Added). The article of manufacture of Claim 38, wherein the polyethylene is high density polyethylene.

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